

REMARKS

The present amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action filed on November 22, 2005. The Examiner rejected claims 1-6, and 9-17 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,504,830 issued to Boehme (Boehme). Claims 7 and 8 were rejected as obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,685,351 issued to Chen (Chen) in combination with U.S. Patent 6,499,191 issued to Howie, Jr. (Howie). Furthermore, claims 1-6 and 9-12 were also rejected as anticipated by Chen.

Applicants make a minor amendment to claims 1, 7 and 9 in order to better recite the claimed invention. These amendments are not made in response to the present rejections.

The present invention as set forth in claim 1 relates to a light guide mounted onto an electronic device.

The light guide is made out of elastic material and is placed through an insertion hole in the front panel. The light guide is in pressure contact with the peripheral surface of the insertion hole. This pressure contact fixes the position of the light guide and may reduce or entirely eliminate the need for additional components or actions for securing the light guide, such as, for example, brackets, glue, bolts, soldering, etc. It would be readily apparent to a person of skill in the art that this would significantly reduce the cost of manufacturing electronic devices which comprise large number of light emitting indicators.

Applicants respectfully assert that independent claim 1 is patentable over Boehme, because Boehme does not disclose a "light guide ... composed of a[n] ... **elastic body**" nor that the light guide is "fixed by an outer peripheral surface thereof... being in **pressure contact** with an inner peripheral surface of [an] insertion hole" as recited by claim 1 (emphasis added). Neither does Boehme disclose "a light guide formed of light transmitting **elastic body**" which is "**frictionally held** by said insertion hole" as recited by claim 9 (emphasis added).

In contrast, the light emitting rods of Boehme are not elastic. They are described as being formed out of "plexiglas material" (Boehme, col. 1, l 62). Plexiglas is generally considered in the art

to be relatively rigid; it is certainly not considered to be elastic. Furthermore, the rods of Boehme are neither fixed by pressure contact with the periphery of an insertion hole, nor are they frictionally held by an insertion hole. Instead, each rod element is fastened by a separate mounting element (Id. at col. 4, l 21).

Therefore, claims 1 and 9 are not anticipated by Boehme. Claims 2-6 and 10-17 they depend from independent claims 1 and 9, respectively, and accordingly are not anticipated by Boehme for at least the reasons set forth above.

Applicants respectfully assert that independent claims 1, 7, and 9 are not anticipated by Chen. Chen does not disclose a light guide having an elastic body which is held by **pressure contact** with an insertion hole as recited in claim 1, or which is **frictionally held** by an insertion hole as recited by claim 9. Furthermore, Chen does not disclose a step of “cutting a[n] ... **elastic body**” where the cutting is performed “**along a cross section**” of the elastic body as recited by claim 7 (emphasis added).

There is no disclosure that the plurality of light conduct posts 51 cited by the Examiner are made out of elastic and there is no disclosure that their production requires cutting an elastic body.

Furthermore, Chen’s drawings support a clear inference that the light conduct posts are rigid. See, for example, Figs. 4 and 5. There the light conduct posts 51 are inserted into the seat 50 so that each post is supported by the narrow seat only at a narrow middle portion of the post. The light conduct posts are positioned horizontally in the drawings and would also have to be positioned horizontally when the invention is used in practice, because that is the usual configuration of a computer case of the type described by Chen. Thus, while the light conduct posts are positioned horizontally and only supported at a narrow portion at their middles, their front and rear ends do not bend or “slump” under the force of gravity. It can be therefore inferred that the light conduct posts are rigid.

In addition, Chen cannot anticipate claims 1 and 9 because it does not disclose that the light conduct posts are held in pressure contact with an insertion hole or frictionally held by an insertion hole. Chen fails to specify how the light conduct posts are held in the light conduct post seat. A person of skill in the art would likely believe that they are held in by glue, which is the usual way to secure small plastic components in computer cases.

Furthermore, Chen fails to specify cutting performed along a cross section as recited by claim 7. The Examiner correctly noted that Chen does not disclose any cutting. However, the Examiner states that cutting a light guide is conventional and it would have been obvious for a person of skill in the art to use cutting to form the light conduct posts disclosed by Chen. Even, if the Examiner's suggestion that cutting a light guide is conventional is taken at face value (which it is not), the light guides disclosed by Chen could not have been possibly formed by the type of cutting recited by claim 7. Claim 7 recites that the light guides must be cut "along a cross section" while Chen clearly states that the light guides have lens shaped (i.e., convex and concave) ends (see Abstract; col. 1, l 66 through column 2, l 2). A cross section is defined as the intersection of a three dimensional object with a plane (i.e., a flat surface). Thus, any cutting along a cross section must result in a flat surface and cannot result in convex or concave surfaces, as discussed by Chen. Therefore, even if the Examiner is correct in stating that cutting is generally known in the art, claim 7 cannot be anticipated or made obvious by Chen, because cutting as recited by claim 7 will never result in the light conduct posts disclosed by Chen.

For the reasons stated above, Chen does not anticipate, or render obvious claims 1, 7, and 9. Claims 2-6, 8 and 10-12, depend on patentable claims 1, 7 and 9, respectively, and accordingly are not anticipated by Chen for at least the reasons set forth above.

Howie does not cure any of the defects of Chen. Howie does not disclose a light guide which has an elastic body. The "light pipe" disclosed by Howie is made out of "clear light transmitting plastic" (col. 2, l 45). Howie not only fails to describe the plastic as elastic, but also states that "the planar body is self supporting" (col. 2, l 47) making a strong suggestion that the body is in fact rigid.

Howie does not state how the light pipe is attached to the knob, therefore Howie cannot anticipate the “pressure contact” and “frictionally held” recitations of claims 1 and 9. And while Howie does mention cutting, he does not disclose cutting “along a cross section” of the body. In fact, the shape of the light pipe disclosed by Howie (see Fig. 6) makes it clear that it was not produced by cutting along a cross section but required cutting along more complex surfaces.

For the above discussed reasons, Howie can not be combined with Chen to render claims 7, and 8 obvious.

An Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) is being filed concurrently with the present amendment. The IDS includes a translation of an Office Action issued by the Chinese Patent Office. This Chinese Office Action did not reference any new prior art, but Applicants submit it nevertheless for the Examiner’s benefit as it analyzes art cited by the Examiner in the present case.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket No. 3903-2040900. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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